

And by his syde a naked swerd hangyng;
And up he rideth to the heighe bord.
In al the halle ne was ther spoken a word
For merueille of this knyght; hym to biholde
ful bisily ther wayten yonge and olde.
THIS strange knyght, that cam thus sodeynly,
Alarmed save his heed ful richely,
Saleweth kyng and queene, and lordes alle,
By ordre, as they seten in the halle,
With so heigh reverence and obeisaunce,
As wel in speche as in his contenaunce,
That Gawayn, with his olde curteisye,
Though he were come ageyn out of fairye,
Ne koude hym nat amende with a word.
And after this, biforn the heighe bord,
He with a manly voys seith his message
After the forme used in his langage,
Withouten vice of silable or of lettre;
And, for his tale sholde seme the bettre,
Accordant to his wordes was his cheere,
As techeth art of speche hem that it leere.
Albeit that I kan nat sowne his stile,
Ne kan nat clymben over so heigh a stile,
Yet seye I this, as to commune entente,
Thus muche amounteth al that ever he mente,
If it so be that I have it in mynde.

In seide, The kyng of Arabie and of
Inde,
My lige lord, on this solempe day
Saleweth yow, as he best kan & may,
And sendeth yow, in honour of youre
feeste,

By me, that am al redy at youre heeste,
This steede of bras, that esily and weel
Kan, in the space of o day natureel,
This is to seyn, in foure and twenty houres,
Wherso yow lyst, in droghte or elles shoures,
Beren youre body into every place
To which youre herte wilneth for to pace,
Withouten wem of yow, thurgh foul or fair;
Or, if yow lyst to fleen as hye in the air
As dooth an egle whan that hym list to soore,
This same steede shal bere yow everemoore,
Withouten harm, til ye be ther yow leste;
Though that ye slepen on his bak or reste;
And turne ayeyn with writhyng of a pyn;
He that it wroghte koude ful many a gyn;
He wayted many a constellacioun;
Er he had doon this operacioun;
And knew ful many a seel, and many a bond.

THIS mirrou eek, that I have in myn hond,
Hath swich a myght that men may in it see
Whan ther shal fallen any adversitee
Unto youre regne, or to youreself also;
And openly who is youre freend or foo.
And over al this, if any lady bright
Hath set hire herte on any maner wight,
If he be fals, she shal his tresoun see,
His newe love and al his subtiltee
So openly, that ther shal nothyng hyde.
Wherfore, ageyn this lusty someres tyde,
This mirour and this ryng, that ye may see,
He hath sent to my lady Canacee,
Your excellente doghter that is heere.

THE vertu of the ryng, if ye wol heere,
Is this; that if hire lust it for to were
Upon hir thombe, or in hir purs it bere,
Ther is no fowel that fleeth under the hevene
That she ne shal wel understonde his stevene,
And knowe his menyng openly and pleyn,
And answer hym in his langage ageyn.
And every gras that groweth upon roote
She shal eek knowe, and whom it wol do boote,
Al be his woundes never so depe and wyde.

THIS naked swerd that hangeth by my syde,
Swich vertu hath, that what man so ye smyte,
Thurghout his armure it wole kerve and byte,
Were it as thikke as is a branched ook;
And what man that is wounded with the strook
Shal never be hool til that yow list, of grace,
To stroke hym with the plat in thilke place
Ther he is hurt: this is as muche to seyn,
Ye moote with the platte swerd ageyn
Stroke hym in the wounde, and it wol close.
This is a verray sooth, withouten glose,
It failleth nat whils it is in youre hoold.

AND whan this knyght hath thus his tale
toold,
He rideth out of halle, and doun he lighte.
His steede, which that shoon as sonne bryghte,
Stant in the court, as stille as any stoon.
This knyght is to his chambre lad anon
And is unarmed and unto mete yset.

The presentes been ful roially yfet,
This is to seyn, the swerd and the mirour,
And born anon into the heighe tour
With certein officers ordeyned therfore;
And unto Canacee this ryng was bore
Solempnely, ther she sit at the table.
But sikerly, withouten any fable,
The hors of bras, that may nat be remewed,
It stant as it were to the ground yglewed.
Ther may no man out of the place it dryve
for noon engyn of wyndas ne polyve;
And cause why, for they kan nat the craft,
And therfore in the place they han it laft,
Til that the knyght hath taught hem the manere
To voyden hym, as ye shal after heere.

REEF was the prees that swarmeth
to and fro
To gauren on this hors that
stonedeth so;
for it so heigh was, and so brood
and long,

So wel proporcioned for to been strong,
Right as it were a steede of Lumbardye;
Therwith so horsly, and so quyk of eye,
As it a gentil Poilleys courser were,
for certes, fro his tayl unto his ere,
Nature ne art ne koude hym nat amende
In no degree, as al the peple wende.
But everemoore hir mooste wonder was,
How that it koude goon, and was of bras!
It was of fairye, as the peple semed.
Diverse folk diversely they demed:
As many heddes, as manye wittes ther been.
They murmureden as dooth a swarm of been,
And maden skiles after hir fantasies,

Rehersyng of these olde poetries;
And seyde that it was lyk the Pegasee,
The hors that hadde wynges for to fle;,
Or elles it was the Grekes hors Synoun,
That broghte Troie to destruccioun,
As men in these olde geestes rede.

AN herthe, quod oon, is everemoore in
drede;
I trowe som men of armes been therinne,
That shapen hem this citee for to wynne.
It were right good that al swich thyng were knowe.

Another rownd to his felawe lowe,
And seyde, he lyeth! it is rather lyk
An apparence ymaad by som magyk,
As jogelours pleyen at this feestes grete.
Of sondry doutes thus they jangle and trete,
As lewed peple demeth comunly
Of thynges that been maad moore subtilly
Chan they kan in hir lewednesse comprehend;
They demen gladly to the badder ende.
And somme of hem wondred on the mirour,
That born was up into the maister tour,
How men myghte in it swiche thynges se.

Another answerde, and seyde it myghte wel be
Naturally, by composiciouns;
Of anglis, and of slye reflexiouns;
And seyden, that in Rome was swich oon.
They speken of Alocen and Vitulon,
And Aristotle, that writen in hir lyves
Of queynte mirours and of prospectives,
As knowen they that han hir bookes herd.

AN oother folk han wondred on the swerd
That wolde peren thurghout every thyng;
And fille in speche of Thelophus the kyng,
And of Achilles with his queynte spere,
for he koude with it bothe heele and dere,
Right in swich wise as men may with the swerd
Of which right now ye han yourselyen herd.
They speken of sondry hardyng of metal,
And speke of medicynes therwithal,
And how and whanne it sholde yharded be,
Which is unknowe algates unto me.

HO speke they of Canacees ryng,
And seyden alle, that swich a wonder thyng
Of craft of rynges herde they never noon;
Save that he, Moyses, and kyng Salomon
hadde a name of konnyng in swich art.

Thus seyn the peple, and drawn hem apart.
But natheless, somme seiden that it was
Wunder to maken of fern/asshen glas,
And yet nys glas nat lyk asshen of fern;
But for they han yknowen it so fern,
Therfore cesseth hir janglyng and hir wonder.
As soore wondren somme on cause of thonder,
On ebbe, on flood, on gossomer, and on myst,
And alle thyng, til that the cause is wyst.
Thus jangle they, and demen and devyse.
Til that the kyng gan fro the bord aryse.

HEBUS hath laft the angle meridional,
And yet ascendyng was the beest roial,
The gentil Leon, with his Aldiran,
Whan that this Tartre kyng, this Cambynskan,
Roos fro his bord, ther that he sat ful hye,
Toform hym gooth the loude mynstralcye

Til he cam to his chambre of parements,
Theras they sownen diverse instruments
That it is lyk an hevne for to heere.
Now dauncen lusty Venus children deere,
for in the fyssh hir lady sat ful hye,
And looketh on hem with a freendly eye.

THIS noble kyng is set up in his throne;
This strange knyght is fet to hym ful sone,
And on the daunce he gooth with Canacee.

Heere is the revel and the joltee
That is nat able a dul man to devyse.
He mooste han knowen love and his servyse,
And been a feestlych man as fressh as May,
That sholde yow devysen swich array.
Who koude telle yow the forme of daunces
So unkouth and so fresshe contenaunces,
Swich subtil lookyng and dissymulynge
for drede of jalouse mennes aperceyvynge?
No man but Launcelot, and he is deed.
Therfore I passe of al this lustiteed;
I sey namoore, but in this jolynesse
I lete hem, til men to the soper dresse.

THE styward bit the spices for to hye,
And eek the wyn, in al this melodye.
The usshers and the squiers been ygoon,
The spices and the wyn is come anon.

They ete and drynke, and whan this hadde an ende,
Unto the temple, as reson was, they wende.
The service doon, they soupen al by day;
What nedeth me rehercen hire array?
Ech man woot wel, that at a kynges feeste
Hath plente, to the mooste and to the leeste,
And deyntees mo than been in my knowyng.

After soper gooth this noble kyng
To seen this hors of bras, with al the route
Of lordes and of ladies hym aboute.
Swich wondryng was ther on this hors of bras
That, syn the grete sege of Troie was,
Theras men wondreden on an hors also,
Ne was ther swich a wondryng as was tho.
But fynally the kyng axeth this knyght
The vertu of this courser and the myght,
And preyde hym to telle his governaunce.

THIS hors anon bigan to trippe and daunce
Whan that this knyght leyde hand upon his
reyn,

And seyde, Sire, ther is namoore to seyne,
But, whan yow list to ryden anywhere,
Ye mooten trille a pyn stant in his ere,
Which I shal telle yow bitwix us two.
Ye moote nempne hym to what place also
Or to what contree that yow list to ryde.
And whan ye come ther as yow list abyde,
Bidde hym descende, and trille another pyn,
for therin lith the effect of al the gyn,
And he wol doun descende and doon youre wille;
And in that place he wol abyde stille,
Though al the world the contrarie hadde ysware;
He shal nat thennes been ydrawe ne ybore.
Or, if yow liste bidde hym thennes goon,
Trille this pyn, and he wol vanysshe anon
Out of the sighte of every maner wight,
And come agayn, be it by day or nyght,
Whan that yow list to clepen hym ageyn